



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
TENNESSEE COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
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PHIL BREDESEN
Governor

VIRGINIA T. LODGE
Commissioner

**TCDHH COUNCIL MEETING
League for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
May 16, 2008**

Members Present: Randy Chappell (Chair), Lordy Smith, Patti Bell as proxy for Assistant Commissioner Andrea Cooper, Laurie Pullins, Dana Hughes, Executive Director Thom Roberts

I. Welcome & Announcements & Introductions:

- Meeting called to order at 9:40 a.m. by Randy Chappell.

II. Review of Previous meetings minutes

Reading of the minutes was tabled due to not having enough members for a quorum.

III. Division of Rehabilitation Report, Andrea Cooper, Assistant Commissioner (by Patti Bell)

Staff Updates:

- Welcome Lana Newton, who replaces Cathy Steger as the Division of Rehabilitation Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist.

30-Year Celebration:

- Andrea acknowledged the accomplishments of the council and challenged them to continue to maintain a diverse and active membership, and to tackle the challenges before them.
- Andrea congratulated the council on 30 years.

Division of Rehabilitation:

- All of the counselor positions are now filled. We are fully staffed with 14 counselors who work with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- The Mega Conference is May 28th – May 30th and fifty (50) staff members, as well as ten (10) of our Community Rehabilitation Providers are going.
- The Division of Rehabilitation Services has been working with the Veterans Association in partnering with the returning veterans that we are just now beginning to see. Many have hearing impairments, blindness, or traumatic brain injury.

IV. Council Member Reports**Laurie Pullins:**

- I continue to stay active within the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, informing them about the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Governor is aware of their needs.
- I will be representing the Knoxville HLAA chapter in Reno, Nevada at the National convention. The next convention is here in Nashville and I would encourage you to attend.
- I participated in the Cochlear America's first Social Media Summit on hearing loss on May 1st. It was very informative and fun.

Dana Hughes:

- I have been charged with being the TAD representative. TAD has three (3) main concerns:
 1. The Deaf Centers don't seem to be very productive in serving the community. TCDHH needs to investigate this and find out why things are not going well. It would be helpful if you would set priorities and investigate the three (3) centers that we're concerned about.
 2. Our second concern is the needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, particularly with mental health counseling. This is a state wide issue and we'd like to know where the counselors are receiving training.
 3. TAD's third concern is about educational interpreters in mainstream programs. I was told that the schools are hiring non-certified interpreters. How is the educational department determining their qualifications?
- Eight Deaf Tennessee representatives are going to the National Association of the Deaf conference in New Orleans, July 7th – 12th.

Randy said there is the EIPA (Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment) that is provided thru the State. Some interpreters are not certified but do have to have the evaluation and assessment. It is similar to the old N.A.D. ratings. It is within the educational setting itself; to make sure the interpreter is able to work with the student they're with.

Sandy Cohen said she has been working with Tina Prochaska, who is in charge of the Statewide Educational Workshops provided by the Tennessee School for the Deaf. It is her understanding, from working with Tina that The State of Tennessee Department of Education is in the process of adopting the EIPA as a prerequisite for licensure for interpreters in the state. T.S.D. will be administering the test, or Tennessee Temple University. Lisa Godfrey is the person to contact at Tennessee Temple. Alan Mealka has been working with the State Department of Education to hopefully approve a minimum standard of skill level and put it in place.

Dana asked what requirements are there for taking the test before licensure? Sandy replied that there are no requirements. That is why it is so important to contact the State Department of Education and let them know how important this is. Dana asked who to contact in the State. Sandy recommended he contact Joe Fisher who is the Assistant Commissioner for Special Education.

Thom mentioned that in each packet, and also on the table, there was a hand-out on how to contact their legislator.

Lordy Smith:

- I went to the S.R.C. (State Rehabilitation Advisory Council) meeting in April. We have six deaf people who have finished our job training program who still can't get a job. Vocational Rehabilitation is not helping them find jobs after training.
- The Black Deaf Advocates is having their regional meeting in North Carolina, June 5th – 8th.
- Our local chapter of B.D.A. is planning to have a V.R. counselor speak to them about learning how to provide services to the Deaf community in Memphis.
- The Quota club that Lordy is a member of provided support for the movie "Wrong Game". The money raised will go to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and other people in the community.

Randy Chappell, Chair:

- I'm going to take my legal certification in June.
- The Tennessee R.I.D. convention is July 18th and 19th at Southwest Tennessee Community College in Memphis.
- The Region Two R.I.D. will be in Raleigh, North Carolina, July 30th – August 1st.
- Memphis is going to offer a workshop on May 24th. It's going to be a mental health type thing. How to help yourself as an interpreter.

Dana asked who the speaker would be at the R.I.D. Convention, regarding mental health. Randy told him it would be Virginia Cowels that would be speaking.

V. Executive Director's Report, Thom Roberts:

- February**
- 8 – Chattanooga TRID Workshop-attended and set-up TCDHH display
 - 13 – Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) Advisory Council Meeting
 - 21 – Gwen Pace's Memorial Service
 - 26 – Career Day sponsored by Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - 28 – Montgomery County Volunteer Action Committee (MVAC)
- March**
- 4 – TN Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) Emergency Preparedness Meeting
 - 6 – Deaf Blind Program Specialist Interviews – Chattanooga
 - 17 – Sorenson Video Relay Service Open House – Brentwood
 - 25 – TN Council on Social Welfare Conference – Guest Speaker
 - 28 – Les Hutchinson's Retirement Party
- April**
- 8 – TSPN Intra-State Departmental Meeting
 - 10 – TSPN Mid-Cumberland Regional Meeting
 - 15 – Adelle Wood's Retirement Party
 - 25 – Tennessee Rehabilitation Center Graduation
 - 29 – Southeastern Regional National Rehabilitation Association Conference
Guest Speaker
- May**
- 2 – Better Hearing and Speech Month Picnic
 - 7 – MVAC Meeting
 - 8, 9 – Organizational Policies and Practices Training

Other Activities:

TN Division of Rehabilitation Services hired Lana Newton as Deaf-Blind Program Specialist.

DRS will be providing our VR Counselors with Deaf & Hard of Hearing caseloads with training on June 9-11.

Sita Diehl, with National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, will have their State convention in Memphis with emphasis on services to the Deaf Community.

Dana asked what was going to happen in the future regarding mental health people who can work exclusively with the deaf.

Randy said he was going to insist that he is one of the interpreters at the conference.

Thom said the suicide prevention hotline is now trying to install the videophone so a person that is deaf, who is contemplating suicide, can talk with a counselor in sign language to get help instead of going through a relay operator. Thom assured Dana that he would bring those concerns to the conference.

Dana offered to present at the conference, and to explain it to the legislature also.

VI. Center Reports

Jackson: www.j-cil.com

Our Secretary, Michelle, has moved into the role of an interpreter. She will be going to Mississippi this summer for training. Everyone is answering the phone.

- The Jackson Chapter Tennessee Association of the Deaf had their meeting at our facility in February.
- Amy has been giving a sign language class to a company who has a deaf client.
- Jackson had their emergency preparedness class on February 25. It was very informative.
- In March Jackson started their ASL class. Lisa Mahoney, their interpreter is now Lisa Cepparulo. Sign language classes end on April 22.
- The Nashville Zoo trip ended early due to rain.
- The T.A.D. Board meeting was held at our offices on April 26th.
- On May 17th there is a workshop called “Language, It’s Phenomenal”.
- The first week of June, Jackson will have an A.S.L. camp.

Nashville: www.leagueforthe deaf.com

Less Hutchinson retired on March 31. Jamie Jones is serving as Interim C.E.O. for April and May. Beginning June 1, Sally Hussey will be the new Executive Director.

Knoxville: www.kcdtn.org

- We have ten (10) full-time staff members at K.C.D. We have five (5) certified interpreters. Nine (9) of the ten (10) staff members do community interpreting. We’re governed by a 15-member board and by regulation we’ve adopted a 51% national standard so that a majority of the board members must be deaf.
- We’re working more closely with the Vocational Rehabilitation in Knoxville. We now meet with V.R. counselors on a fairly regular basis. One of the things that has grown out of the new communication agreement that we have is a job club. We formed this club and meet once a month with them and do pre-employment counseling and so forth. Once they are employed, V.R. will provide job coaching.
- We have Youth Classes at K.C.D. every two weeks with the deaf juniors and senior high school members from Knoxville. There are about 25 students in the classes and our end of the year party we invite the entire deaf youth freshman through senior to attend the party. We had 65 deaf students at the party last week.
- Our East Tennessee Foundation Grant application was turned down by the East Tennessee Foundation. We are very disappointed about that but will continue to go after youth leadership money.
- One of our senior members, Betty Battle, will be awarded the most prestigious community award in Knoxville, Thy YWCA’S Distinguished Service Award at a banquet on August 21st.
- We depend a great deal on the interpreting income in the center, as with many other centers. This year after four (4) months, we’re at 15.4% of where we were last year at this time. We will fight hard for any money that is on the table.

Johnson City: www.frontierhealth.org

- We have been teaching students from a cosmetology school American Sign Language. Our final workshop is on May 20th.
- NAMI came to our facility and shared some information with our deaf community.
- We've been teaching a lot of A.S.L classes and will start again this month with another group. The class is a six week course.
- Tennessee School for the Deaf, Strickland came and did a workshop on their Transition Program. Social Security, who also attended, has contracted with Mike Rowe. Mike is helping us get interpreters in Johnson City and in Kingsport.
- NETDA is working hard with car washes, donations, events preparing for their DAW on Saturday, October 11th.

Chattanooga: www.partnershipfca.com

- We have a new Community Rehabilitation Provider, Sharon Bryant. Sharon is doing job placement, job readiness, job retention through the Vocational Rehabilitation contract. Since January, she has seen about 50 deaf people, several of which have been placed in jobs.
- We revamped one of our physician's interpreter's positions and made it an interpreter / mentor position. Darwin Ayscue has mentored three (3) students this past semester. He also attended the mentoring workshop at the Gallaudet Outreach Center. He is mentoring two (2) other people who may potentially become certified in the near future.
- Isaac Stanley is our new Staff Interpreter.
- We are finally getting a Case Manager. I have interviewed three (3) candidates, two (2) of which are deaf and one is hard of hearing. We hope to have that person, along with somebody who is deaf or hard of hearing on board by June 1st.
- We teach sign language classes at Siskin, which is a Rehabilitation Facility for Children. Some of the parents are taking the class so they can communicate with their children.
- I would like to challenge the council, Thom, and the other centers to do some kind of advertising or networking to let people know that we have videophones available in our centers.

Memphis: No Report.

VII. Old Business and New Business:

Old Business:

Council vacancies:

We received all the nominations and information from T.A.D., as well as some nominations that came through for the Governor's appointed position. We are now waiting to hear back from the Governor's office. If anyone knows of someone who would like to sit on the Council, please let Thom know. Thom encourages the Tennessee Association of the Deaf to continue to search for people to sit on the Council. A vacancy is coming up in the spring that T.A.D. has to send nominees to. Nominees can be forwarded to Thom throughout the year.

Retreat:

A retreat is being planned for the Council in August, prior to the Council meeting. The tentative date is August 8th. Issues such as educational interpreters, mental health services and legislation, and the five-year plan will be discussed at the retreat. The five-year plan must be finished by August. Randy asked each of the Centers to send a summary of what they would regard as their status in mental health providers within the community they are in.

New Business:

No new business was discussed due to lack of quorum.

VII. Announcements/Public Comments:

The Council's term will expire June 30, 2008 unless the legislature votes Yes to SB2466 and Yes to HB3527. If these bills pass it will mean that the Council will go on until June 30, 2012.

The Public Library celebrated its 30th anniversary. It has the largest collection of material relating to deafness and hearing loss in the state. They are updating the Statewide Directory of Services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. You may update your entry at www.tndeaflibrary.nashville.gov

Mike Turner is the new contact person for the Tennessee Relay Service.

Gov-VRS, a new video relay service for the Governor and government employees, is a private network. It is a free service that deaf people can have access to.

Meeting adjourned by Chairperson Randy Chappell at 12:10 p.m.